

No 4
The Practical Influence of the Do-
ctrine of the Holy Trinity repre-
sented.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the
U N I V E R S I T Y
O F
O X F O R D,

On Trinity Sunday. June 9th 1745.

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O X F O R D,

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2 Cor. XIII. 14.

*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and
the Love of God and the Communion of
the Holy Ghost be with You All. Amen.*

THIS Benediction in these or the like Words is the Usual Conclusion of St Paul's Epistles, and is very suitable both to the Benevolent Spirit, and the Sublime Nature of the Doctrine He preached. He does not pray barely in the Words of a Pious Philosopher, that God would bless them, but is distinct in mentioning Each Person of the Godhead, and imploring the gracious Influence of Each for the Preservation of their Persons and Prosperity of their Actions. He prays for their Welfare and Improvement under this Religion in the same Manner in which They had at first been admitted into it; for as They had been baptized *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, so They were to depend on the same Protection throughout their Lives, and to commemorate Each Divine Person, in their Prayers and every Religious Act and Office.

Now is it not a greater Difficulty to suppose, that Two Created Beings should thus be joined with the Great Creator of All Things in Religious Invocations and in the solemnest Acts of Worship and Duty, and This by the express Appointment of God Himself, who has declared Himself *jealous* of his Honour, and that *He will not give his Glory to Another*, and in a Dispensation peculiarly designed to abolish Creature-Worship, Is not This upon the Whole a greater Difficulty than Any in the received Doctrine of the Trinity which this inconsistent Supposition was calculated to avoid? The General Doctrine itself is not only deduced from those separate Texts, which in many different Places ascribe the Divine Attributes and Operations to the Son and Holy Ghost, which would have been abundantly conclusive; but, being an Article of so much Importance, It is not left to be collected merely by Inference, but in these Texts, and such as these, It is set forth in plain and positive Terms, and These Three Divine Persons are represented as the One True and only God. By *St John* (for I presume the Genuineness of that Text of his does not now need Evidence, there being in this Case, as in most disputed Points of Religion, Positive Proofs on the One Side, against some

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Difficulties only on the Other; by this Apostle)
 We are told clearly and expressly, that *there*
are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father,
the Word and the Holy Ghost, and These Three
are One. 1 John 5. 7. By St Matthew We are
 plainly assured, that by our Saviour's own
 Institution We are to be initiated into the
 Profession of his Religion in this fixed Form:
In the Name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Ghost: by which We equally ac-
 knowledge the Existence and dedicate Our-
 selves to the Service of Each Divine Person.
 And, lest the Precedence given to the Pater-
 nal Relation in both these Passages might pos-
 sibly seem to imply any superior Distinction
 in Nature rather than Personality, in my Text,
 and in some others, the Order is inverted, and
 the Son is placed even before the Father, not
 to intimate any Priority of any Kind in Him,
 but to signify their Equality in the Godhead,
 and that on That Account it is indifferent,
 Which is first mentioned, so All are acknow-
 ledged. The precise Notion of the Personal
 Distinctions in the Deity the Scripture has not
 farther ascertained than to shew demonstrably,
 that It amounts to more than a Distinction
 of Characters and Offices, and less than a Di-
 stinction of Beings and Essences; and Those
 who

who have attempted to go deeper into the Explanation of it, have been more successful in opposing Each Others Opinions than in establishing their own; 'till in the End the General Faith was weakned even by Those who concurred in believing all that the Sacred Writings had taught concerning this Article, and who sincerely acknowledged the real Divinity of the Father Son and Holy Ghost, and the Existence of one only God. --- There is indeed at first Sight a Mystery in this Doctrine, and it will ever continue such after the best Explications of it; but it is sufficient that, as far as it is necessary to be known, it is clearly revealed in Scripture; --- that it is free from all Inconsistency, since the Distinctions of Personality do not divide or destroy the Unity of the Divine Being; --- and that all Interpretations, which have crossed this Article, have upon the strictest and most impartial Examination^a apparently ended in Absurdities and Contradictions. --- But, tho' this Doctrine of the Holy Trinity be acknowledged as True, it is too apt to be considered as a mere speculative Point; whereas 'tis certain the Apostles and First Preachers of Christianity represented it

^a See Dr *Bishop's* Lectures, and Mr *Stephens's* Excellent Sermon on Col. II. 8.

otherwise, and that it is indeed in its own Na-
 ture of a Practical Influence. --- It is thus par-
 ticularly introduced in this Passage in the Text.
 It is usual with *St Paul*, whatever was the
 Occasion of writing his Epistles, always to
 conclude with some Directions and Advices for
 the Amendment of their Morals. Whatever
 Controversies He determines, or Whatever Do-
 ctrines He explains in the former Part, still He
 takes Care in the End to remind them of the
 Necessity of Holiness, and to stir them up to
 such Virtues as might adorn their Christian
 Name and Profession. He teaches them, that
 the Intent of this Religion was to reform their
 Lives, and make them better Men, and that
 the peculiar Doctrines of Christianity had a pe-
 culiar Tendency to work this Effect of Purity
 and Goodness in their whole Conversation.
 Thus in this very Epistle, as Doctrinal almost
 and Argumentative as Any, in this concluding
 Chapter He exhorts the *Corinthians* earnestly
 to Reformation, and as a Means to this End
 reminds them of the Practical Influence of this
 Article, and endeavours to direct Them to the
 Right Path and to support them in it, by im-
 plying the Blessing of the Holy Trinity upon
 them. *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the
 Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Ghost
 be with You All. Amen.* In

In this Light therefore I shall proceed to illustrate this Article, and shall shew that This Doctrine of the Trinity is not a mere speculative Truth, but that it is of immediate Practical Influence, that is, of great Consequence to the Right Discharge of our Duty to God Ourselves and our Neighbours.

That it is an Article of high Importance to the Right Discharge of our Duty to our Maker, is the First and clearest Part of the Observation. For Right Notions of the Deity must be necessary to the true Worship of Him. Honour and Adoration must be paid to Him according to the Nature and Manner of his Perfections, as far as We can arrive at the Knowledge of them; and as This is properly the Foundation of all other Duties, so an Error in This is suitably of the highest Importance. True Worship is the Basis of true Religion and Virtue; all Kinds of Idolatry having ever produced Superstition in the Ceremonial and Corruption in the Moral Parts of Duty. Now the Rule is, that We must worship God as He is; and therefore, if there be a Trinity of Divine Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence, the same Adoration must necessarily be due to Each Divine Person. In this Light this Article appears to be of the highest imaginable Importance.

l to importance. If there be not sufficient Founda-
 This tion for it in Scripture, We, who receive the
 ecuc Doctrin of the Church as set forth in the *A-*
 Pra banasian Creed, are plainly guilty of Idolatry
 ence in paying Divine Worship to Creatures, which
 God is due only to the Creator; (for the Distin-
 tion of superior and inferior Worship has
 e to often been sufficiently exposed) If there be
 Ma sufficient Authority for it, then They who
 Ob oppose it are guilty of Blasphemy in rob-
 Deity bing the Son and Holy Ghost of their Divi-
 Him nity and the Adoration due to them by Na-
 Him ture. On whichever Side the Truth lies, the
 f his Importance of it is unquestionable, and is ei-
 the ther Way of fundamental Consequence. And
 erly This very View of its Importance affords Us
 Error at the same Time a strong Argument of its
 ance Truth and Certainty. The Revealed Com-
 and mand is clear and expres, that *All Men should*
 pro honour the Son even as They honour the Father;
 Cor and the Behaviour of the Apostles and Primi-
 v the tive Christians was ever suitable thereto. Their
 e is Devotions were directed to Each Divine Per-
 ivine son, and They prayed expressly to the Holy
 ence, Trinity. Now neither could the Precept nor
 ge to the Practice have been cleared from Idolatrous
 rticle Imputation, if there had not been the same
 Im Foundation for the Worship of Each in the Di-
 vinity

vinity of their Nature, if there had not been an equality of the Persons in the Godhead. Upon *this* Supposition there will follow indeed a Necessity of paying Divine Honours to Each, which could not have been defensible on Any *Other*. If God has manifested Himself unto Us in a Trine Personality, We must adore Him according to the Method of his own Manifestation, or We adore Him not, as We ought, in the Truth of his Perfections. Besides, that there will of Course arise Distinct Duties from the distinct Acts and Offices of Each Person as represented to Us in Scripture, and We must offer suitable Returns of Devotion to our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier: Whether We come to the Knowledge of these Distinct Personalities by Reason or Revelation, makes not the least Difference in our Obligations when known; our Duty herein arising from the Nature of the Truth itself discovered, not from the Manner only of discovering it. If We are assured, that with the Father and Fountain of the Divinity there co-exist an Eternal Son and Spirit, by whatever Means We are assured of this, yet We are equally obliged to the Worship of these three Divine Persons. That this Discovery is owing, as We acknowledge it is, to Revelation only, makes no Altera-

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tion in the Case or the Duty of Those who are blessed with this Revelation; but only shews that it is not necessary to Those who have only the Light of Nature to direct them; but that the Denial of this Article, which may be excusable in the Ignorance of Heathens, is fundamentally destructive of the Faith of Christians. It is so far from being a speculative Point amongst these, that it relates to the first Principle of Unity, the Object of Religious Worship; and where there is no Agreement in this, there can be no Foundation for Publick Devotion, no joint Adoration betwixt Those, who pay Divine Honours to the Divine Being only, and Those who, in Contradiction to the expresse Testimony both of Reason and Revelation, scruple not to pay the same outward Expressions of Religious Invocation to Those whom They acknowledge They consider only as created Persons. If then a suitable, that is, a *Divine* Reverence be due to the *Divine* Persons and Offices of the Son and Holy Ghost, as revealed in Scripture, if Publick Worship itself be a Practical Duty, then is this Doctrine also sufficiently Practical in this Respect of our Duty to our Maker; and We cannot join Communion with Those, who in their Explanations of this Article run into

either Extreme which is inconsistent with other Parts of the Gospel Doctrine ; either Those, who, tho' convinced by plain Testimonies of Scripture of the Divinity as well of the Son and Holy Ghost as of the Father, yet consider these only as different Names and Characters of one only Person ; or Those, who on the other Hand, convinced by the like Evidence from the same Authority, of the Distinct Personality of Each, do therefore consider them as distinct Beings, denying consequently the proper natural Divinity of the Son and Spirit, and ascribing the Creation of them to the sole Divinity of the Father ; falling by the former into the Error of *Sabellius*, by the latter into the Heresy of *Arius* with all its various Subdivisions. Whereas the Scripture represents these Persons to be so distinct as not to be One the Other ; so united as to be only one perfect Deity : Or, as the *Athanasian* Creed well expresses it, "The Catholick Faith is This, that
 "We worship One God in Trinity and Trinity
 "in Unity ; Neither confounding the Persons,
 "nor dividing the Substance."

And as This Doctrine is Practical with Respect to the right Discharge of our Duty to God, so also with Regard to the Duty we owe to Ourselves. If the Connection of This does

not

not at first Sight appear, yet a little Attention
 to it will sufficiently explain it. This Reve-
 lation of the Doctrine of the Trinity is not a
 separate contemplative Doctrine, relating only
 to the Manner of the Divine Existence, in
 which We are not concerned, but it has imme-
 diate Relation to our State and Nature, and
 gives Us a more perfect Knowledge of *Our-*
selves as well as our *Creator*. For it is by the
 Effects of the Operations of these Divine Per-
 sons that They are made known to Us. The
 Manner of their Coexistence in the Godhead
 is not explained to Us, (either perhaps be-
 cause We are not at present capable of com-
 prehending it, or are not interested in it, or
 for other wise and good Reasons) but it is by
 their distinct Acts and Offices that their di-
 stinct Personalities are revealed to Us; by
 the several Parts which They are represented
 as bearing in the glorious Oeconomy of our
 Redemption. --- God the Father vouchsafed
 after our Breach of the First Covenant to ad-
 mit Us to a Capacity of Pardon and Happiness,
 and to this End *gave his only begotten Son, that*
Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but
have Everlasting Life. To fulfil this great De-
 sign, God the Son condescended to submit to
 the Abasement of Incarnation, to unite in his
 Person

Person the Divine and Human Natures, and by the perfect Obedience of an unspotted Life, and the meritorious Sufferings of an Ignominious Death, to offer a full and sufficient Satisfaction for the Sins of Mankind, procuring Acceptance for their Persons, and requiring a like exemplary Purity in their Lives; --- To compleat the Scheme, and promote the Reformation and Salvation of the World, God the Holy Ghost contributes likewise his gracious Assistance, inspires Us with Good Thoughts, and strengthens our Holy Resolutions; cooperates in every Instance with all our just Endeavours, comforts the Heart of the Penitent, and enables Him to stand in the Day of Trial. Thus Each Divine Person bears a Share in the Mystery of our Redemption, and contributes to lead Us to Holiness and Happiness; and on this Doctrine, on the Necessity of the Blessing and Gracious Influence of the Whole Trinity, This Benediction in the Text is apparently founded. Now certainly a Christian who believes all this must look on Himself in a very different Light from any One who is unhappily Ignorant of the Gospel, or who perversely rejects it, or who more unaccountably evades this particular Article, tho' He pretends to admit the Authority of this Revelation in general. For if We

have

have sinned so heinously, that Nothing but the
 Blood of a Divine Person could expiate our
 Offences, If We have corrupted our Natures
 so grievously, that We are not able of Our-
 selves to turn to Repentance without the per-
 petual Assistance of a Divine Spirit, if We be-
 lieve these Articles, We must look on Our-
 selves in a much lower View, than Those who
 acknowledge only their Obligations by Crea-
 tion, and expect to be justified at the great
 Day of Accounts by their own Righteousness:
 And suitably more earnest Exercises of Peni-
 tence and a deeper Sense of Humility will be
 our incumbent Duty, who know We are No-
 thing and can hope for Nothing, but thro' the
 Grace and Condescension of those Divine Per-
 sons on our Behalf; thro' the Merits of Christ
 to atone for past Offences, and the Grace of
 the Spirit to work in Us future Obedience.
 At the same Time that This Belief makes Us
 more Humble thro' a Representation of our
 Object State by *Nature*, It gives Us likewise
 a higher Notion of our Priviledges by *Grace*,
 of the nobler Pretensions that We are entitled
 to by that Covenant, which We were admitted
 into by Baptism in the Name of the Holy Tri-
 nity. How does it in this Respect raise our
 Idea of Ourselves, and form Us to great and
 noble

noble Views, to consider how much We are honoured by the Peculiar Offices of each Divine Person in our Behalf; that, besides the Blessings of Creation and Preservation, the Eternal Son of God has once died for Us, and is now interceding for his faithful Disciples, that the Eternal Spirit did heretofore inspire the Apostles and First Preachers of Christianity, and endue them with Miraculous Gifts and Powers for the Propagation of it, and does still continue to help our Infirmities and sanctify the Heart of every true Believer? What Dignity does it add to our Condition, beyond any natural Advantage, to consider how much Man is the Care of God, as revealed to Us under this Distinction of Persons, how much Every Good Christian is interested in the peculiar Offices of Father, Son and Holy Ghost? And how strong is the Obligation to act suitably to this Dignity of our covenanted Condition, and with the humblest Sense of All that is Natural in Us, to live up to the new Value which God has stamped upon Us thro' the Redemption of Christ and Sanctification of the Spirit? On Supposition of the Truth of this Doctrine, which is confirmed by the whole Tenour of the New Testament in numberless Places and various Expressions, the Practica

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Importance of it is plainly visible, and our Duty is improved to higher Degrees than on any other Principle.

For the same Reasons We may add, that This Doctrine of the Trinity is Practical even in the Instance that may least be considered, in Regard to the Discharge of our Duty to our Neighbours. For since All are honoured by the peculiar Offices of these Divine Persons, All have or ought to have on that Account a higher Regard to Each Other. The Patriarch *Job* argues, and very strongly, the Duty of Kindness and Beneficence to all our Brethren of the Human Species, from the Consideration only of their joint Relation to our common Creator: *Did not He, says He, that made Me in the Womb make Him, and did not One fashion Us in the Womb? Job 31.15.* This was doubtless a very proper Motive to mutual Affection; but of how much stronger Force is it, when We can carry on the Argument thus; Did not He that redeemed Me, redeem Others, and did not One fashion Us in the New Birth? Are We not justified by the Merits of the same Saviour, and regenerated by the same Holy Spirit? Did not Christ die for All, and is not preventing and assisting Grace offered at least to All? *If then the Grace of our*

Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with All, shall We despise or disregard the Meanest of our Brethren, who are honoured with the same Privileges and entitled to the same glorious Hopes with Ourselves? If They are not thought beneath the Protection and immediate Regard of Each Divine Person in the Godhead, shall We poor sinful transitory Mortals disesteem our own Nature, and undervalue Those for whom the Eternal Son of God shed his Blood, and whom the Eternal Spirit continually attends with the gracious Offers of his Assistance? If our Brother of the lowest Degree be notwithstanding the Purchase of a Divine Sacrifice and the Living Temple of the Holy Ghost, This raises Him higher in our Regard than any other Consideration, and requires a more benevolent Treatment of the meanest Object upon Earth, that is so highly exalted and interested in the Scheme and Oeconomy of Heaven. --- But All This Dignity of Ourselves and our Fellow-Creatures depends on the Divinity of the Son and Spirit, on the true and proper Satisfaction of our Saviour, and the real Inspiration of the Holy Ghost. If Christ was only an Holy Prophet or Messenger from Heaven, to reveal the Will of God to

Men,

Men, and died only as a Witness to confirm the Truth of the Doctrine He taught, and if Grace be Nothing more than an happy Chain of such natural Causes as concur to promote Reformation and Amendment of Life, then all the great Condescension and Favour of the Gospel is lost, and We are left without any Propitiation for our Sins, or meritorious Title to Acceptance and Reward. Every such Supposition degrades Us to our natural State, leaves Us to our own Strength to perform good Works, and to our own Merit to atone for our Iniquities. And even an Impartial Heathen might be sensible of the Consequence. The Truth is, The Doctrine of the Trinity is so far from being merely a Matter of Speculation, that it is the very Essence of the Christian Religion, the Foundation of the Whole Revelation, and connected with every Part of it. All that is peculiar to this Religion has Relation to the Redemption of Christ and the Sanctification of the Spirit ; and Whosoever is endeavouring to invalidate these Articles, is overthrowing or undermining the Authority of this Dispensation, and reducing it to a good Moral System only, or Treatise of Ethicks. If the Word, or Logos, who became incarnate, was a created Being only, then the Mystery of his

Incarnation, so much insisted on in Scripture, and the Love expressed to Mankind thereby, so much magnified, dwindle into an interested Service; and a short Life of Sufferings, concluded indeed with a painful Death, is rewarded with Divine Honours, and a Creature advanced thereby to the Glory of the Creator; for the Command is plain and express, that *All the Angels of God should worship Him*. And have not many Saints and Martyrs undergone the Same Sufferings without the like glorious Recompence? And is not the Advantage to Christ Himself by his Incarnation and Passion greater, on this Supposition, than to Men, for whose Sakes the Sacred Writings represent this Scheme of Mercy undertaken? Again, if the Motions of the Holy Spirit, so frequently spoken of, are only figurative Expressions, and do not necessarily imply any real Person, who is the Author of them, or if this Person be only a created Being, then We are deprived of all Hopes of *Divine* Assistance in our spiritual Warfare, and have Nothing but our own Natural Abilities to contend with against the World, the Flesh and the Devil. --- And is it not Amazing then that this Article could ever be represented as a mere abstracted Speculation, when our Deliverance both from the Penalty and the

Power

Power of Sin does so plainly depend upon it? It is on this Account, that the *Athanasian* Creed very justly declares, that "Whosoever would be saved," that is, would be entitled to the covenanted Method of Salvation thro' Christ, before all Things it is necessary, that He hold the Catholick Faith," after which follows the Scriptural Account of the Doctrine of the Trinity. Cases of invincible Ignorance or uncovenanted Mercy are not here spoken of; but This is only a true Account of the Terms of Salvation according to the Sacred Writings, wherein a true Faith is made as necessary as a right Practice, and This in particular in order to that End. For *Arianism*, *Socinianism* and All those several Heresies, of what Kind or Title soever, which destroy the Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, are indeed no Other than different Schemes of Infidelity; since the Authority, End and Influence of the Gospel are as effectually evacuated by disowning the Characters in which our Redeemer and Sanctifier are there represented to Us, as even by contesting the Evidences of its Divine Original. These Notions plainly rob those Two Divine Persons of their Operations and Attributes, and of the Honour due to them, lessen the Mercy and Mystery of the Scheme

Scheme of our Salvation, degrade our Notion of Ourselves and our Fellow-Creatures, alter the Nature of *several* Duties, and weaken those great Motives to the Observance of *All*, which true Christianity proposes to Us.

If from this View of the Tendency of this Doctrine in itself We proceed to look into Fact, We shall find the Argument yet more convincing. Ecclesiastical History will much confirm the foregoing Observations on the Practical Influence of this Article. Whilst the Doctrine of the Trinity was retained unsophisticated and undisputed, It had its proper Effect in that genuine Purity, which it naturally inspired. Christianity shone with a Lustre, which it soon after lost, and never since recovered; and its Professors lived like Those, who thought They owed their first Hopes of Salvation, and their daily Progress towards it, to the immediate Assistance of no less than Divine Persons. The Holiness of their Lives reflected Honour on their Faith, and thereby contributed to the Extent and Propagation of it. But from the Rise of *Arianism* very different Effects very speedily ensued. The Christian Name and Profession soon lost its Esteem amongst Those, who distinguished not betwixt the particular Tenets of its professed Disciples,

and

and Cruelties were acted by the *Arian* Party whilst in Power, which equalled if not exceeded the Rage of Pagan Persecutions. Those who had robbed their Redeemer of his Divinity, seemed to have divested Themselves of their Humanity, and proceeded to Injuries towards their Brethren, paralleled only by their Injustices towards their Saviour. The most Eloquent of the *Greek* Fathers, the Depth of whose Judgment was equal to the Strain of his Oratory, insomuch that He was distinguished by the Title of *The Divine*, has a particular Oration^a on this very Subject. He dares appeal to Fact, charges them with Immoralities and Barbarities unworthy of Sober Heathens, and challenges them to give any like Instance of such unsuitable Practice amongst the Orthodox, whose Faith had sweetned their Tempers, and taught them to imitate the infinite Condescension which They professed to acknowledge in a God incarnate. He sets forth in a very affecting and pathetic Manner the Ravages of *Arian* Cruelty, and the Becoming Conduct of real Christians, who submitted with patience under Adversities, and, which is perhaps the more difficult Part, had used Power, when They enjoyed it, with Moderation and

^a *Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 25.*

Tendernefs : and then leaves All to judge by
 an Argument which All might comprehend
 the Fruits which their respective Doctrines pro-
 duced. 'Tis true, Outward Practice is alone
 no absolute Proof, but it is a presumptive Evi-
 dence of the Truth and Goodness of the Do-
 ctine espoused. It may proceed either from
 a real Sense of Piety, or from mere Human
 Art and Policy, which the Searcher of Hearts
 only can distinguish ; but where it is Regular
 in *Each*, and Uniform in *All* its Professors, and
 coincides with the Tendency of the Principles
 itself, there it may justly be imputed to the
 Honour of such Faith and such Professors of it.
 There are indeed, who contradict and disgrace
 the best avowed Principles by unsuitable Lives
 and there are, it must be confessed, who
 Appearance lead better Lives than any Prin-
 ciples They avow could oblige them to ; yet
 still as All reasonable Men will act steadily ac-
 cording to their Belief, and All but the most
 abandoned will sometimes be influenced by
 therefore those bright Examples, which have
 recommended a Doctrine *which is itself ac-*
cording to Godliness, are justly urged in its Fa-
 vour, and do but repay the Debt which They
 owed, as springing Themselves from its Virtue
 and Efficacy : whilst They, who have weakne-

tho

those great Motives to Piety and Goodness, which are drawn from the mysterious Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God, and the Supernatural Assistance of the Eternal Spirit, have been however less inconsistent in those frequent Breaches of Common Morality, which the concurrent Testimony of History has charged upon them.

The Inferences arising from the View of the Practical Influence of this Article, are the Necessity of avowing and pressing it as the Vital Fundamental Point of our Religion, and the Necessity of living answerably Ourselves to such efficacious Motives to Piety, as the Belief of it affords Us.

The Doctrine of the Trinity, We have seen, is so far from being a Matter of Speculation, or a single separate Article, that it is the distinguishing Glory of the Gospel, and in its Consequences both explains and enforces our Duty in a Degree superior to any other Revelation real or pretended. The Denial of it in any of those various and inconsistent Heresies alters entirely the Object of our Worship, the Method and Ground of our Salvation, and the Motives to our Obedience. It strikes at the Root of any Adoration of the Son and Holy Spirit, excludes their Offices, or the

D Weight

Weight of them at least, in the Oeconomy of our Redemption ; for, as the late learned Defender of this Article significantly expresses it :
 “ Upon their Hypothesis *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Ghost*, will amount only to the Love of the Father thrice told, which “ supersedes both the Other.” It destroys that Mystery of the Gospel, which the Apostles so frequently speak of in such high Terms, evacuates the Notion of a Propitiatory Atonement, and neither represents the heinous Demerit, nor the dreadful Consequences of Sin in the same Light as the Doctrine of a Divine Sacrifice for the Expiation of it. It is not therefore merely a Difference of Opinion in a particular Article, but it is, as St Paul calls it, *Another Gospel*, a new and distinct Method of obtaining Forgiveness, in Derogation of and Opposition to that mysterious Scheme of Mercy devised by the great Governour of the Universe ; and therefore, as the same Apostle adds, *tho’ We or an Angel from Heaven preach it, Let Him be Anathema*. Are We then in Earnest Friends to Virtue ? Are We real Admirers of that Morality, which is so much in the Mouths of Those who are invalidating the

strongest Enforcements of it? Let Us even
 for the sake of that Moral Righteousness in-
 sist on the Importance of a Doctrine, which
 so highly improves, so warmly recommends,
 so necessarily requires it, and *contend earnestly*
for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, because
 it is so effectual to the making *Saints* of its Pro-
 fessors in All After Ages. It confirms all for-
 mer Motives to Piety, and adds peculiar ones
 of its own: joining Gratitude to Duty and In-
 terest, and quickning every Principle, which can
 influence a Rational Creature; since He must
 be insensible to a Degree of Stupidity, or aban-
 doned even to Self-Condernation, who can
 believe the Abasement of the Eternal Son of
 God for his Sake, and the gracious Offices of
 the Eternal Spirit for the same End, and can
 possibly remain uninfluenced in his Conduct by
 the Direction of such Belief. If then We are
 Sincere in our Professions of a Regard to Vir-
 tue, Let Us not so widely mistake its Interests,
 as to think of supporting it by destroying the
 best of Ties and Obligations to it. -- And if
 Arguments from the Exigence of particular
 Times can add Weight to a Duty so necessary at
 all Times, as that of insisting on so fundamen-
 tal a Truth, We have every Call upon Us, which
 can awaken the Attention of Those, who have

any Love to the Author of their Salvation, or any tender Regard to the Welfare of their Fellow-Creatures; when not only Infidels (which is little Wonder,) are daily ridiculing the Doctrines of Redemption and Sanctification, but Many of Those, who still retain the Name of Christians, have gone more than Half Way to meet them, and given up all the distinguishing Articles of *Revealed*, in Compliance with the professed Advocates of *Natural* Religion; with Sincerity perhaps pleading vainly and ineffectually for That, which the Others never intended for more than a Name and Pretence, the more compleatly to destroy Both. What the Consequences have been in Fact, whether a Degeneracy of Morals has not followed in Proportion to the Corruption of Faith, Experience may determine; and It is no less than Self-Contradiction, however intended, in Those who declaim much in Favour of Moral Practices, whilst They are striking at the only Principles, which can effectually support them. We cannot say too much in Favour of Morality, if We do not place the meritorious Cause of our Salvation upon it; but We disserve its Interest and weaken its Motives, if We insist not on the Necessity of acknowledging that propitiatory Atonement and that assisting Grace, which

which the Scriptures in numberless Places and
 a great Variety of Expressions distinctly ascer-
 tain. Whilst Some therefore, even in professed
 Discourses on the Duties of Christianity, shew
 that They disclaim these necessary Doctrines,
 and Others seem cautious of speaking their
 Sentiments, as if They were afraid of giving
 Offence to Hereticks or Advantage to Infidels;
 whilst on the very Subject of the Institution
 appointed to commemorate our Saviour's Pas-
 sion, and to convey the Grace of the Holy
 Spirit, We find the Divinity of their Persons
 entirely omitted, the Expiation for Sin once
 offered by the One, and the Assistance conti-
 nually offered by the Other, not only passed
 by but expressly contradicted, and a different
 Reason given for both, which reduces the Cha-
 racter of our Saviour to that of a Martyr, and
 of the Holy Ghost to that of a mere outward
 Blessing; whilst the Articles of our Creed are
 thus attacked by open Enemies and false
 Friends, It is our Duty on these seasonable
 Occasions to declare that We are Christians in
 Reality as well as Name, that We have not
 subscribed Doctrines which our Hearts do not
 assent to, but that We hope to be saved by the
 Merits of a Divine tho' crucified Saviour, and
 to be enabled to discharge the Conditions of
 his

his Covenant by the Cooperation of the uncreated Spirit. We must not in Compliance with Men venture to alter the Scheme, which Infinite Wisdom has appointed to bring Us to Himself; but We *must* publicly and We *may* securely adhere to the plain Doctrines of the Gospel, and defy the united Efforts of Adversaries of all Denominations to shew any Thing Unworthy of God or Unuseful to Man, in the Revealed Account of the Incarnation and Passion of the Second, and the Inspiration and Concurrence of the Third Person in the Holy Trinity. This indeed was *to the Jews a Stumbling-Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness*, which however is a farther Evidence, that it is the real Doctrine of the Gospel; since, if That had been Nothing more than the Moral System which Some Men make of it, It could not have been such Matter of Offence to the Philosophers, who preached up Morality to a tolerable Degree Themselves, and aimed at carrying it higher. They would have concurred in the exalted Purity of the Evangelical Precepts, if it had not been attended with such debasing Doctrines as interested the Deity in the Redemption of Mankind in such a Manner as their Reason would not stoop to acknowledge. *But unto Them which are called, as the Apostle goes*

on

on, *This*, which the Others esteemed *Foolishness*,
 is no less than *Christ the Power of God and the*
Wisdom of God. It is the Completion of a
 Scheme devised and executed by the Holy Tri-
 nity in Favour of fallen Men, who renounce
 the Mercy if They deny the Method ; which
 We must therefore insist on as necessary, 'till
 their boasted Reason can either invalidate the
 Evidence or shew any Absurdity in the Do-
 ctrine itself ; and in this Result We are suffi-
 ciently Secure.

But then It is our farther and principal Care
 to do Justice to our Holy Belief by a Holy Pra-
 ctice, and to give its important Motives a pro-
 per Weight on our Hearts. For since this Do-
 ctrine of the Trinity appears to be of such im-
 mediate Practical Influence, We must not hold
 the Truth in Unrighteousness, but must shew
 the Good Effect of it in our whole Conversa-
 tion, and live like Those who believe They
 were not only created and preserved by God
 the Father, but redeemed by the meritorious
 sufferings of God the Son, and sanctified by
 the continual Presence and Assistance of God
 the Holy Ghost ; or as *St Peter* expresses it
Ep. 1. 2. as being *Elect according to the Fore-*
knowledge of God the Father, thro' Sanctification
of

of the Spirit unto Obedience, and Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ. We must worship Him, as He has revealed Himself to Us, in a Trinity of Persons, and pay the Duties arising from the distinct Offices of each Divine Person. Our Obligations to our Maker, our Gratitude to our Saviour, and a Reverential Regard to the good Motions of our Daily Assistant, should distinguish the Professors of this Faith, and We should set a suitable Value on that Nature, which had its Original at first from Heaven, has since been honoured by the Son of God's assuming it Himself, and is still regenerated by the Spirit of God. This should open our Hearts to All who are honoured with Us in this Nature, engage Us earnestly to forward All in the Pursuit of their true Happiness, and raise our Compassion and Tenderness even to Those who despise their Privilege and best Dignity. May this Mercy and Care shewn to Us All by the Holy Trinity prevail with Us to shew the same to Ourselves and to Each Other, and to promote the great End of their respective Offices by a speedy Return to Goodness and Virtue and an Humble Imitation of the Moral Attributes of the Deity. May then *the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God and the*

Com

Communion of the Holy Ghost be so with Us All,
to bring Us All to true Faith and sincere
obedience in this World, and thereby to end-
less Glory in the Next.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and
God the Holy Ghost, Three Divine Persons in
the undivided Essence, be ascribed, as is most
due, All Honour, Power, Praise, Might, Ma-
jesty, and Dominion, both now and for ever-
more.

F I N I S.

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...of the Holy Ghost be to mind Us All,
...Us All to true Faith and Justice
...in the World, and thereby to end
...the War.



